

Weekly Bureau of Information for All Who Till the Soil or Are Interested in Making Homes

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

All inquiries and communications addressed to The Times-Dispatch will receive prompt attention. This department will appear each Monday, and contributions or suggestions will be welcomed.

Facts for Farmers, Stock Breeders, Poultry Raisers, Orchardists, Truckers and Gardeners—Queries and Answers

BRIEF NOTES THOUGHT OUT BY THE WAYSIDE

Plant a few evergreens judiciously. They are always beautiful. They give life and expression to the whole group of shrubbery, which, of course, adorns your yards and lawns.

Those farmers who give their turkeys plenty of range and secure new breeding stock frequently, are making good money growing turkeys.

A pound of butter may be produced with four pounds less feed if you balance the cow's ration.

Dew, rain and sunshine may cause greater deterioration in expensive implements than ordinary use. To leave the implements at the end of the rows or in the field without shelter means great loss. No progressive farmer can afford it. What is your shed for anyhow?

The curse of the farm in the past has been its poverty. Ignorance has been the principal cause of that—ignorance and shiftlessness.

Few horticulturists realize the importance of keeping up with the horticultural procession of the world.

Prune fruit trees in winter for wood and in summer for fruit.

In buying a horse, remember, any lameness will be betrayed if you will have the animal step off at a slow trot. Such a defect is apt to be covered up in a swift trot.

Live stock feeding means more than the actual profit made on the stock. Animals make use of the rough feed that is produced on the farm in very large quantities.

The American hen laid 20,000,000,000 eggs last year and had a good right to cackle.

One of the great essentials of a silo is tight walls to exclude air.

Turkeys like a high place to roost, but for the mother and her young nothing is so good as a pole raised five or six feet from the ground, to which they take very kindly.

Hens ought to pay at least a dollar a year per head. If they do not something is wrong. Learn the trouble. The sooner the better.

It is a fact not generally known that eggs absorb foul odor almost as quickly as butter or milk.

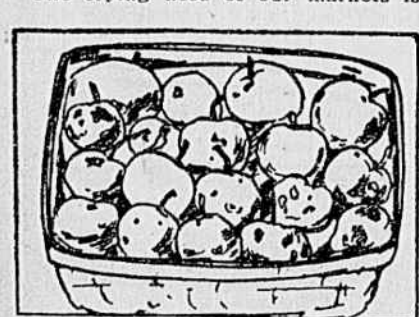
FINELY-COLORED APPLES

One of the greatest problems confronting the apple grower is how to get color in his fruit; where the orchard is cultivated color is too dull. We may say some day know more about it. I find that a few kinds will color well naturally when under tillage. The Jonathan is an eminent example. With Baldwin and most other kinds the color remains dull unless they are hand until fully ripe; even then there must be plenty of sunshine. I find that color is added very rapidly during the last three or four days preceding the correct picking time. A tree in enfeebled health or whose leaf functions are in any manner disturbed will grow highly colored fruit, but that color is not good. It is usually do not want. I will cite as a notable illustration a Northern Spy crop that I grew two years ago. The trees were very vigorous and under cultivation. They received two drenchings of a strong solution of lime-sulphur just before budding time; the first, applied during a heavy wind, was not deemed sufficient, as we could not develop the color. A day or two later the spraying was repeated with an opposite wind, and they were overdone, no doubt of it. The result was that the foliage did not develop. Fifty per cent of the fruit never got more than half size, the remaining leaves never became large, but they had good color. The trees produced a heavy crop of wonderful



fully beautiful fruit of the highest color and flavor. I felt that it was a marvel that they could carry through so fine a crop with this scarcity of foliage, and that it would be such a match can be done in any way to improve the selling qualities of apples. The grower who has a few of the standard kinds following each other in the natural order of ripening has an advantage; he has a more extended picking season.

I make a close study of the exact time of maturity of the various kinds



for apples with their color. The bulk of the Baldwin crop does not have a chance to get its color, as it is gathered too soon, and this is a situation that the orchardist cannot always help. The fruit must be gathered before the storms come, or there will be great loss. If the crop is large, the work must begin early, unless help is abundant enough to care for it in a limited period. However, color is the thing to strive for, and it may sometimes pay to take a little risk in waiting for more maturity. I feel that it is possible to take boxes into the orchard to be dumped around, filled and hauled into the packing-house without getting more or less soiled. Hence, by all means orchard or picking boxes should be used.

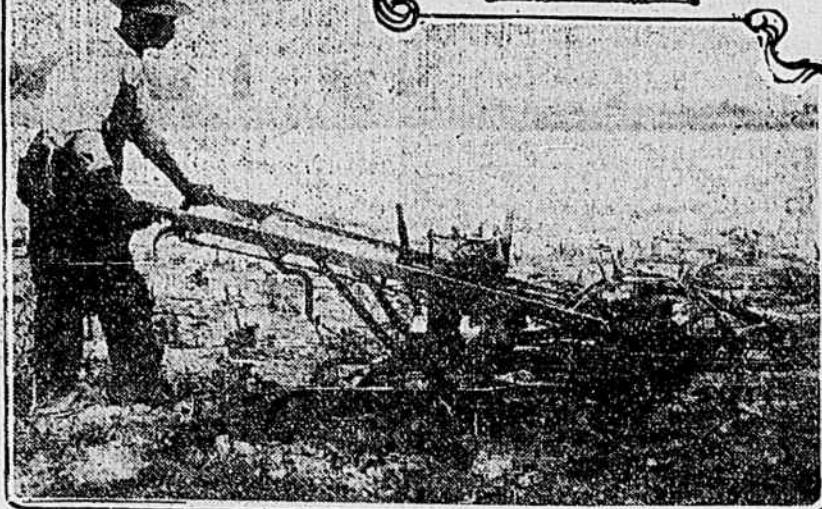
Of late the subject of wiping the fruit is attracting considerable interest, and many questions, such as, "Does wiping injure the keeping quality of the fruit?" "Does it pay to wipe apples?" are heard at conventions and meetings of fruit growers. It always pays to wipe fruit if the trade prefers, as they generally, in such cases, pay more than enough to repay the additional cost.

If wiping is done in the proper manner, it will not impair the keeping

INVENTS MECHANICAL PLOW



The Newton plow conveying attachments to or from the field



The four-stroke cultivator at work

and aim to gather each kind as nearly as possible at this precise period.

Our spraying operations are most thoroughly done and in consequence San Jose scale and codling moth are having a pretty hard struggle for life in our orchards. Our worst insect disturber is the aphid, and we have not done much of importance towards its control. The leaf roller, the red bug and the apple scab fungus in our particular section have not as yet given us any serious trouble. When they come the work will be much harder. We fully realize that these and other bad things may reach us at any time and are watchful. The fruit grower must be ready at a moment's notice to meet his enemies. It is never in any orchard as in the old days when the markets were less critical and any sort of an apple would do; and the man who now comes out winner by producing a crop of perfect apples either must have a marvelous lot of nature's assistance, must be a good fighter. It is not alone a matter of knowing, but of doing.

In the matter of picking apples it is difficult to explain and describe when the time has arrived that an apple has acquired all the perfection that nature can give it. It is somewhat a matter of feeling. Yet there are signs which may be read by an expert and I believe that it is rather a matter of hours than of days. Some have said that an apple is ripe enough to pick when the seeds are black; but that is not altogether true. Watch the coloring process. It is very rapid on the last days and when it is apparently finished it is not well to leave the fruit long upon the tree, it has probably gotten its perfect development, its best keeping quality and its finest flavor. It should be immediately picked and cared for; if possible, it should be wrapped in paper and placed in cold storage if wanted in its perfect condition. After ripeness and crispness of the winter market. In the case of the yellow or green varieties the signs are much the same and one must learn to read them, although the color factor here is lacking.

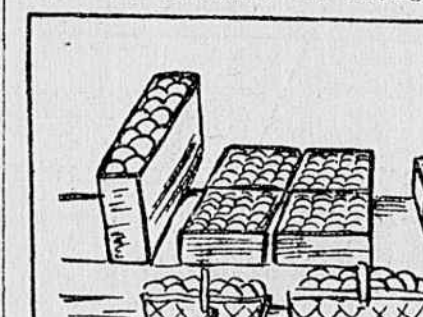
PREPARING FRUIT FOR MARKET

On the general principles of picking fruit, practically all growers agree. A great many, however, are careless in the handling, the fruit often being bruised, cut, does not matter a great deal whether buckets, baskets, or sacks are used to pick in, but the essential requirement is that the fruit be picked and transferred to the box very carefully.

A few fruit growers practice the method of using their packing boxes for field work. The market demands good, clean boxes, and it is almost impossible to take boxes into the orchard to be dumped around, filled and hauled into the packing-house without getting more or less soiled. Hence, by all means orchard or picking boxes should be used.

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Various Styles of Packs.

quality of the fruit. Severe rubbing would probably be an injury, but if the unnatural spots and color resulting from the presence of sprays, etc., are removed, this is all that is necessary, though if the fruit is to be sold for immediate consumption, a higher polish would probably be of material aid. Since the market greatly appreciates extra effort. This wiping should be done immediately after picking, on account of the sweat or oil that may gather on the surface of the fruit, rendering wiping practically impossible. The fruit should be carefully culled

and graded before reaching the packer, because first-class packing cannot be done if it must be graded and sorted at the same time. This as well as the wiping of the apples and pears may be done as soon as the fruit is brought from the orchard, and then placed in packing boxes for storing, until packing begins.

Quite a large number of growers pile their fruit in bins, but this is very detrimental, indeed. It admits of a great deal more sweating, due to poor ventilation, and also of considerable bruising in handling.

It is a very commendable feature that many growers are using a lithograph, instead of the old method of having an ink stamp on the end of the package. Another plan which



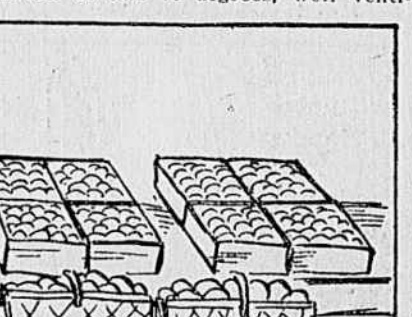
Virginia Mules.

In any of the mules receiving either ration. The mature mules in the two-year test were in better condition than the young mules. The mature mules in the two-year test were in better condition than the young mules. The mature mules in the two-year test were in better condition than the young mules.

Color Makes No Difference. Boston and other New England cities demand eggs with brown shells, while New York and San Francisco prefer white. There is an actual difference in price due to colors in these countries. The color of eggs depends upon the breeds of hens. Those of Mediterranean extraction produce white eggs, while the Asiatics produce brown. As a matter of fact, the color makes no difference.

Mushroom Growing.

So far as known Virginia farmers have not been in the habit of making any profit from the mushroom, but then Virginia can grow anything to profit that any other region can and it may be well enough to learn about the mushroom. Dr. Laur, of Illinois, writes a farm journal that any person who has a good cellar that he or she can use can make a profitable business out of growing mushrooms. The temperature of the cellar should be kept between 60 and 70 degrees, well venti-



Mushroom Growing.

lated, as the success of the enterprise depends upon having plenty of fresh air. The soil must be kept moist. See the foundation of the bed, which should be built on a dirt floor. For a bed fifteen feet long and three feet wide two loads of manure will be sufficient. The bed is conical in shape, starting with a three-foot base, building up to a half foot high with a crown of ten inches in height to keep the beds in shape. The bed ought not to cost more than ten dollars, the manure costing four dollars, labor two fifty, loam

CORN FOR VIRGINIA MULES

With the tendency toward increased prices on all kinds of feeds and with the increased attention to the business side of farming, the economical maintenance of mature work mules has become an important problem on many farms in the states where mules are used. It has been the custom in Virginia men on various rations, consisting of oats, corn, timothy hay and perhaps some other common feedstuffs. These have been fed in varying quantities and combinations. Corn has been used extensively as a grain ration. Many students of animal nutrition have given the matter consideration and have recommended a less extensive use of corn and an addition of an increased portion of oats and other feedstuffs.

It has been a prevalent opinion that oats is a better feed than corn for horses and mules. Various arguments have been presented as proof of this statement, yet the fact remains that corn constitutes a great portion of the feed given to mature work animals. The protein content of oats and the mineral content together with the physical condition of the oats as a feed have all been taken as reasons for the efficiency of oats. It has been suggested that a mixture of oats and corn for work mules would be a more satisfactory ration than either oats or corn alone. To determine these points experiments covering a period of two years were made at the Missouri station. It was the plan of the experiment to feed two lots of mules—the grain ration received by one being oats while corn alone should be given to the other. The roughage consisted of mixed clover and timothy hay. By this method, data has been collected which makes possible the following comparison of the two rations for mules.

Mules receiving corn and hay maintained good health and appetites as did the mules fed oats and hay.

The mules which received corn and hay maintained their weight slightly better than did those fed oats and hay.

The mules receiving corn and hay endured hard work in hot weather as well as did those getting oats and hay. No difference in spirit could be detected in the different lots of mules.

Mature mules required three per cent more grain and one and four-tenths more hay to approximately maintain live weight when fed oats and mixed hay than when fed corn and mixed hay.

The mules receiving corn and mixed hay did six per cent more work when the number of hours is used as a basis, than did the mules which received oats.

No abnormal effect could be noticed

than feeding one horse.

The cost of gasoline used in operating the plow, the inventor claims, will not amount to more than the cost of feeding one horse, yet it takes the place of two horses, and, in some cases, especially in turning land, it will take the place of three.

The following, it is claimed, are its principal points of merit: It is operated entirely by one man. It will turn land and take the place of two to three horses. It will disc harrow the land after it has been turned and put in condition for planting. It will cultivate with four shovel cultivators, thus cutting entirely between two rows at a time.

By the attachment of a corn planter or a seed drill, which the company supplies ready to attach, at an extra price, it will plant the corn and seed the small grain.

A pulley is attached to the engine to which a belt can be attached for driving a feed cutter, corn crusher, wood saw, chaff mill, or for any other use of a similar character, where power is needed. There is no annoying work of lifting heavy loads and preparing foundations in making preparation for such use. The plow is guided by its own power to a convenient position near any of the above mentioned machines, a belt is attached to the fly wheel on the engine, and the power is ready.

When starting to the field the operator attaches to the plow frame the small two-wheeled cart, which is shipped with the plow, puts in the body the turning plow, narrow cultivator, or anything else needed for the day's work, mounts his seat and rides to the field. It takes about ten minutes to detach the cart and attach any of the implements needed.

To-Day and Yesterday.

Farming at the present time is entirely different from what characterized the farming of our forefathers. Brawn is no longer at a premium on the farm. It is skill in the art and science of the farm that wins instead of hard labor. Of course, the farm will always demand labor from the farmer, but it is the labor from the skilled hand directed by the trained mind that will best succeed.

Pruning Grapes.

In pruning grapes it must be remembered that the fruit grows on the new wood of the present season's growth which spring from wood grown the preceding season, and never use last year's wood. The fruit is borne near the base of the shoots. Each shoot should bear from two to six clusters, but only a limited number of clusters should be allowed to develop on a single vine.

VIRGINIA MAN INVENTS NEW HORSELESS PLOW

Gasoline Motor Instrument Given Demonstration on Farm of Oscar Swineford.

WEIGHT IS ONLY 450 POUNDS

Cost in Operation, Inventor Claims, Is Less Than Feeding of One Horse—Does Not Pack Ground Like Heavy Tractors.

Joseph N. Parker, of Bedford City, is the inventor of a horseless plow, which appears to fill the long felt want for a power plow light enough and small enough, and economical enough of operation, to serve the typical small and medium-sized farm.

The plow was demonstrated last Thursday on the farm of Oscar Swineford, in Chesterfield County. The demonstration took place in the presence of a number of experienced farmers who pronounced the implement a success. It turned land, harrowed and cultivated as perfectly as the regulation horse-drawn plow. The accompanying photographs were taken during the demonstration.

NEW PLOW WEIGHS

ONLY 450 POUNDS. The development in farm implements heretofore has been along the line of enormously heavy tractors pulling a number of plows or a harrow, the tractors generally weighing several thousand pounds. Their size prevents their use for cultivating purposes, and their weight packs the land too much if they are used to put the land in condition for seeding. The Parker motor plow, it is pointed out, is not subject to this objection since it weighs only 450 pounds and its traction wheels stir the ground instead of packing it.

The inventor claims that his plow is the lightest weight and most complete power-driven implement on the market. A company for its sale has been launched in Richmond, and a wide demand is expected.

The plow is driven by a small nine-horsepower gasoline engine, and is guided by a turn of one handle to the right or left. It can be adjusted for the depth of the plowing, harrowing or harrowing, as desired. It is claimed that for a continuous day's work of say ten hours the consumption of gasoline will be about three gallons.

COST OF GASOLINE LESS

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STATE TO HAVE LARGE DAIRYING EXHIBIT

Will Show Improved Appliances for Sanitary Handling of Milk at State Fair.

EXPOSE ADULTERATED FOOD

Model to Be Shown of Home-Built Silo, Which Can Be Constructed at Small Cost—Valuable Object Lesson to Farmers.

Commissioner Benjamin L. Purcell, of the Dairy Food Division of the State Department of Agriculture, is busy installing in attractive and interesting exhibit at the State Fair grounds. They will occupy a part of the booth assigned to the State Department of Agriculture. This exhibit will contain a display of food products, feeding stuffs for cattle and dairy products. This division of the Department of Agriculture has a separate force of inspectors engaged in traveling constantly through the State, taking samples of food and feeds for analysis. The sale of adulterated and misbranded products, when discovered, is peremptorily stopped, and the offender prosecuted under the pure food laws of the State. The laws are stringent and effective, and have resulted in the prevention of the sale of many adulterated products. In the exhibition, which will be in the nature of a food display cases, giving object lessons to the retailers in the care and protection of their food products pending their use for feeding purposes, and adulterated food products, the low grade by-products entering into the composition of stock feeds, etc. There will also be a large display of Virginia creamery products, cheese and butter made in Virginia factories, which industry has shown in the past few years a remarkable development. There will also be on exhibition some of the latest improved machinery, designed for the sanitary handling of milk, and labor saving devices which should appeal to the dairymen from both an economical and a sanitary standpoint. A model will be shown of a home built silo, which can be constructed at a very small cost, averaging about \$1.00 per ton, according to the capacity. This division of the Department of Agriculture is making a special effort to advance the dairy work of the State, and the display of dairy products and utensils should appeal to every one, but especially to the farmers and dairymen interested in the production of dairy and creamery products. The exhibit will be in charge of Creamery Instructor Howard and Dairy Constructors Rowe and Stahl. A visit to this booth should prove interesting and instructive to everybody.

Canada's Hog Cholera Restriction.

Vaccination of hogs is not permitted in Canada. A regulation of the Canadian government reads as follows: "The use of hog cholera serum or virus, being considered a source of danger, the importation, manufacture, sale or use of such serum or virus is prohibited." The regulation forbids the admission of hogs into Canada from the United States are very strict. Hogs that have been vaccinated by the double method can not be admitted. Hogs coming from localities in which there has been cholera within the past six months are refused entrance. Hogs which are not excluded for these reasons are held in quarantine for one month at the Canadian border before being allowed to go to their destination.

Rural Schools.

Between 1,000 and 2,000 American farm neighborhoods have consolidated their rural schools, usually uniting six or eight into one. The children are transported in motor cars, public wagons or from a district five-mile square, to a four or five-room school on a ten-acre school farm.

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There is such a time in men's lives—a sort of

check-up time.

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SEES HIS DUTY PLAINLY.

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